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THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

Adyar, Madras, India

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SEVEN ADDRESSES

GIVEN FOR LOVE OF THE STAR

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BY

C. W. LEADBEATER

THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE

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THE WISDOM OF THE STAR

THE WISDOM OF THE STAR

OUR belief in the near Coming of the World-Teacher implies for most of us a great deal more than that mere fact, wonderful and inspiring though it be. For most of us it means also a belief in the Hierarchy which sends forth the World-Teacher, and that involves a conception of life which is wholly different from that of the man in the outer world who has no idea that it is being governed and directed from within. Even though there may be among the Brothers of the Star some who have not yet learned that important lesson, at least from their belief in the near Coming there must be the expectation that when He comes He will put right much of what is wrong in the world—that the world will most assuredly in many ways be different after His Advent from what it was before.

If that be true, so much else must also be true. If we grasp the idea of the Great Hierarchy, we know that the final consummation of good is an absolute certainty, and that all things, here and now, must be working together towards that good. Even if we realise only that when He comes, He will change everything, that also implies much. It implies that things *can* be changed for the better; it takes away

altogether the hopelessness which so many people feel when they contemplate existing conditions. I am not for the moment thinking of the great war, but rather of the conditions preceding it. Many good men, looking round upon the world, have felt that unless we can have some radical change, not merely in social conditions, not merely in such matters as the distribution of capital, but in the very hearts and souls of men, no real progress is possible.

To a large extent that is true; but it is precisely that change in the hearts and souls of men which we who follow the Star are seeking to effect, first within ourselves, and then, so far as may be, in others also. A change is sorely needed; a change from self-seeking to the performance of duty. At present the majority of men in the world are working for what they can get out of it. There is no shame in that at an early stage of development; but men are supposed to grow beyond that self-seeking and self-centredness, and presently to arrive at a level where they comprehend that duty is the main factor in life—that man has a duty to GOD, a duty to his country, a duty to himself even. And that last does not mean a compulsion to exploit other people for his personal advantage, but an obligation to preserve himself untainted, to see that he does not fall short of that which GOD expected of him when He sent him forth into evolution. So this transformation from the seeking of self to the doing of duty is precisely one of those things which we, as Brothers of the Star, must earnestly strive to promote.

That transformation means for the average man a prodigious effort, and naturally before he undertakes it he wants to know why he should make it, what will be gained by it, and what are his chances of success.

In other words, he needs a large amount of information, and that along many different lines; he is in a condition of ignorance, and before he can act effectively he must exchange that ignorance for wisdom.

That wisdom the Star can give, but only as the result of study. Supposing that a man is attracted by the positive statement which we make that there is a Great Hierarchy of Adepts directing and guiding this evolution of ours on behalf of the Deity who created it; he probably asks what evidence we can give him of the truth of this assertion, and what further information can be obtained on a subject of such momentous importance.

For evidence we have, to begin with, the testimony of a number of people who have frequently seen and spoken with some of these Adepts, and have been able to satisfy themselves in many different ways that the Hierarchy is a reality. But all these people, while perfectly willing to reiterate that testimony whenever and wherever it may be required, agree in advising the enquirer not to base his faith upon it, but to study for himself the system of philosophy which these Adepts teach, and see how self-evident and coherent, how lucid and convincing are its statements.

It must be clearly understood that we are dealing here not with theories, but with facts in Nature—facts susceptible to scientific investigation. These facts constitute a body of truth which lies at the back of all the religions, which are all of them in their original forms more or less successful efforts to state it, though in many of them, as time rolls on, it is almost obscured by distortions and misapprehensions. The facts, however, remain as true as ever, and those who are ready to take the trouble may still enquire into them.

In a short address I cannot give more than the merest outline of them; but there is an extensive literature for those who are willing to study it.

The broad facts which emerge from such study are these. First of all, there is unquestionably a definite onward movement of evolution which is being guided by the great Leaders whom I have mentioned. This movement clearly implies the existence of a Great Architect of the Universe, and Those who have penetrated much farther into the mysteries of existence than we as yet have been able to do affirm Their absolute certainty on this point. The forces which we find to be flowing forth from Him show us that He must be Threefold, and confirm that doctrine of the Trinity which appears in so many of the great religions. Indeed, the real meaning of all the creeds soon becomes apparent when the higher side of Nature is scientifically examined.

The study of inner realities speedily supplies us with quite a different perspective—an altogether new set of values. We see that outer appearances, which alone are available for our consideration in this lower world, are often utterly deceptive; and that, however disastrous certain isolated events may seem, when they are understood as parts of a magnificent whole, it will be seen that that wondrous entirety is moving steadily onwards to a glorious consummation.

More than that; everything that happens to a man is in reality good for him, even though it may appear to be calamitous. All circumstances, however unfortunate or retarding they may seem on the surface, are in fact just what is needed for his development as a soul. Evidently it is his interest as well as his duty to learn to comprehend this great Divine scheme, in

order that he may intelligently co-operate with it; otherwise he will obviously often fail to discern the true meaning of events, and so will not take full advantage of his opportunities.

A point that it is most necessary clearly to apprehend is that man is a soul. Commonly it is said that he *has* a soul, but that is misleading; he *is* a soul, and *has* a body. Our researches show that he is divine in essence —a spark of the Eternal Fire; and as he came forth from God, so will he one day return to Him. A great ladder of evolution is visible to us, with living beings upon every rung of it, so that we can see exactly how man has come by slow degrees to be what he is. More still; we can see several steps ahead of where we are now, and men stand upon every one of these also—men glorified and perfected, whom we call Adepts. And they tell us that not long ago they stood where we stand, and that if we climb determinedly we shall presently be as They are.

When this knowledge is assimilated, it puts a distinctly different complexion on life. Since this is so, we must manifestly live for the soul and not for the body; we must look at everything from the standpoint of the soul, and when we find (as we so often do) a struggle going on within us between the lower and the higher parts of our nature, we must identify ourselves always with the higher, realising that the lower is not the self at all, but only one of its temporary vehicles.

For one of the grand new truths we learn is the fact of reincarnation; that the immortal soul in its long progress through the ages takes body after body as it needs them for its development, and that this body which we happen to be wearing to-day is neither the first nor the last of them. What we have been in

the habit of calling our life is in fact only one day in our real life, and death is nothing but a night's sleep after one day is done, and before we begin the next.

See how difficulties clear away before our eyes, how the knotty problems of life are solved, when this glorious light dawns upon our horizon. We may have murmured at the injustice of fate, wondering why some should be born rich and others poor, some clever and others dull, some with rude health and others always weak and ill, some as savages and others as highly civilised men. Now, illumined by the Wisdom of the Star, we see that there is no injustice in the matter, any more than there is injustice in the fact that some children are five years old when others are ten. The savage is just a child-soul, and the conditions which surround him, horrible as they appear to us, are those suited for his stage of development; we are older souls, who have passed through his stage ages ago, so we need different treatment, and we get it.

And as to riches and poverty, sickness and health, cleverness and dullness, we are just what we have made ourselves, we receive just what we deserve. How else can we account for geniuses, for precocious children, for the feeling of instantaneous liking or dislike which we so often have when we meet some one whom in this life we have not seen before?

Men often resent and resist this idea when it is first put before them; but there is no room for doubt, not only because this is the only hypothesis which gives a rational explanation of the conditions which we all see around us, but also because there are many who clearly remember some of their past lives, and have

in various ways incontestably proved that their recollections are accurate.

See how much follows from the possession of this key of knowledge—in how many directions it opens the way for our thought. If we have died many times before, death is merely a transition—not the end of life at all, but the beginning of another stage of it. So its whole aspect is changed for us; not only has it become much less important, but it is a friend instead of an enemy—no longer a skeleton carrying a scythe, but an angel bearing a golden key. We know what the men of old meant when they said: *Mors janua vitæ*—Death is the gate of life.

We realise too that there is no longer any fear of ultimate failure. It is God's Will that men should attain the goal of perfection, and every man finally will attain it, however foolishly he may now in his ignorance be acting, however far he may be straying from the path of rectitude. Man has free will up to a certain point; he can delay or accelerate his progress; but he cannot altogether prevent it. Interest and duty combine to enjoin acceleration, so it is well for us to investigate man's evolution both in the past and in the future—to see how we have advanced to our present stage, and to study the lives of Those who stand higher than we, in order that we may learn from watching Them what qualities we need to develop.

Further, we must study Nature, that we may know what powers are available for our use. We shall find that she is wonderfully responsive to every thought, word and act; indeed, that responsiveness is one of her most prominent characteristics, and

shows itself in the great law of cause and effect, or the readjustment of equilibrium. A thought or an action disturbs the equilibrium, and it will always readjust itself at the expense of the disturber, the response corresponding exactly to that which called it forth —good to good, evil to evil. Sometimes this result is instantaneous, sometimes it delays for many years, or even for several lives; but it invariably appears sooner or later. With absolute, relentless, scientific certainty, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap". This harmonises with the religious idea of Divine justice; at least the fact corresponding to it is there, though perhaps the word is hardly applicable, for in our minds it inevitably connotes the image of a human judge, who may be partial, who may be misinformed, who may sometimes be lenient and sometimes severe.

When we decompose water by chemical action we get oxygen and hydrogen in a certain proportion; we do not say that the result is *just*; we say it is in accordance with natural law because we know that it will always happen. If we apply a lighted match to gunpowder we shall have an explosion; if we seize a red-hot iron bar, we shall be burnt; but we should hardly use the word justice to describe the result.

What we must try to realise is that effect follows cause in precisely that way in the moral world, because it is all part of the same world, and therefore under the same laws. If one blows out a candle one sets the air in motion and produces a result in physical matter; but a thought sets matter in motion as definitely as a breath, only it is a much finer kind of matter—the matter of the mental part of our world. That is a substance which can be investigated just as can the

denser physical, though it needs a different equipment and instruments appropriate to its nature. But it is, after all, the same matter far more finely subdivided, and the same general laws hold good at all levels.

People blunder terribly because they do not know this law. They often think that they can escape the consequences of their actions, or throw off the responsibility of them, or make some one else bear the burden of them. But the thing is a scientific impossibility. On the other hand, the man who knows the law can adapt himself to it and use it. But in order to understand we must study; and furthermore we must gain perfect control over ourselves, so that we may be able to alter our lives, and guide them intelligently in accordance with that law.

Obviously, when we are sure of this Wisdom of the Star, it absolutely changes our way of life. We see life now as a whole, we comprehend its object, we see how we should live, and why we ought to obey the moral law. From careful study of Nature we learn how to evolve, how to control ourselves, how best to help others and to make ourselves definitely useful. In this way also we learn to take always the wider, philosophical view, never that which is petty and personal. That is in itself a revolution, for the average man thinks of everything exclusively as it concerns *him*; and no matter how obviously good for the community a reform may be, if it is likely to touch his pocket in any way, he violently opposes it. It is precisely this wicked and short-sighted selfishness that has made it impossible to deal drastically with the drink question and other crying evils; so to bring a man to the point where he takes a broad, unselfish view of everything is already an enormous advance.

Just because of this more comprehensive view, all the troubles of life will look smaller to him, for he will be able to see them in their right perspective. He will hold them all as "light afflictions which are but for a moment" just because his eyes are so firmly fixed upon "the far more exceeding weight of glory" which has been made a living reality for him by the Wisdom of the Star.

He is no longer depressed or irritated by a sense of injustice, for he knows that nothing can ever happen to him which he has not himself caused by his action in the past. He has no fear of death, for he knows exactly what death is, and what part it plays in his evolution. Even when it comes to those whom he loves, his grief at the physical separation is greatly abated by his knowledge of the happier life which they have entered, by the certainty that they are still within the reach of his loving thought, and that the very affection which exists between him and them constitutes a bond which can never be broken—which will keep them in constant communion through all the lives that lie before them.

It is not only the dread of death which is eliminated from his mind, but all other apprehensions and anxieties as well. How shall he fear who understands the truth? How shall he be worried who knows that all life is in the hands of a loving Father who doeth all things well? When once a man grasps even the lower part only of the mighty plan of the Great Architect, he is filled with wonder and joy. Thenceforth the paramount interest of his life is to do what he can to carry out that plan, to perform loyally the part which is assigned to him, and to promote its fulfilment in every possible way. Because of his

knowledge he lives in perfect serenity, in perfect fearlessness and in perfect charity with all.

That is what the Wisdom of the Star does for us; and remember, it is no man-made distortion of a creed, nor even a presumed revelation; it is based, as all true wisdom must be, on the scientific study of the actual facts in Nature. Let me quote to you the words of the great Predecessor of our present World-Teacher:

"Do not complain and cry and pray, but open your eyes and see. The Light is all round you, if you will only take the bandage from your eyes and look; and it is so wonderful, so beautiful, so far beyond anything that man has ever dreamed of or prayed for; and it is for ever and for ever."

THE STRENGTH OF THE STAR

THE STRENGTH OF THE STAR

IT is an old saying that knowledge is power, and we certainly find it to be so in Occultism. The Wisdom of the Star, of which I spoke at our last meeting, brings us not only power to be much more useful in the world than we could be if we were still ignorant, but also strength to face all difficulties, to conquer all the powers of evil. The feeling that behind all stands the great power of evolution, which leads us all to God, gives us strength such as no other thought can supply. It affords us a firm foundation, a basis from which to reason, from which we can deduce all else that is necessary for life.

Weakness comes from uncertainty. The man who does not know upon what he can depend in the ultimate is always weak, because he is fighting for his own hand. He knows of nothing upon which he can rely outside of his own strength. The teaching of the Star is that God is within every one of us, and therefore in and behind every one of us is the divine strength. That is sure; but remember that that divine strength cannot be used by us for personal ends. The man who works for his own personal objects is not yet a vehicle for that superhuman power, because he has not yet realised that he belongs to it and is part of it, and therefore must work for it. As soon as a man realises that, at

once this divine strength is behind him; because he has opened himself to its influence, it can pour into him and take possession of him and support him. A man has within him the strength of God Himself so long as he is working for good and knows himself to be a spark of that Divine Flame—an expression upon the physical plane of that mighty Deity who rules the whole universe.

So from the knowledge which the Star brings to us we gain strength. Now for what do we mainly need strength? It seems to me that we need it for three principal purposes; we need often strength to bear, we need sometimes strength to resist, and we need always strength to act. All these facets, all these aspects and varieties of strength the teaching of the Star will give us, if we will listen to it and follow it out logically.

Strength first of all to bear, because a good deal of trouble, sorrow and suffering comes sooner or later to every one of us. To the man who has no deeper insight than that of the quite ordinary person such afflictions often seem heavy, severe, almost intolerable; but the man who fixes his eyes upon the Star, who knows all that the Star means and what it involves, is so full of higher thought that his eyes are entirely fixed upon his goal, and whatever may happen to him here seems to him, as St. Paul put it, a slight affliction which is but for the moment, which counts as nothing at all in proportion to the far more exceeding weight of glory.

If it be true that the Christ shall come, and come soon, to visit this world of ours, then what does anything else but that matter? That is an overmastering fact which changes for us the relative importance

of everything else; it alters our perspective. We no longer see everything about ourselves as large because it is so near. A proverb tells you that a plate held close to the eyes may hide the sun, although the sun is eight hundred and eighty-five thousand miles in diameter, and the plate only a few inches. Exactly in that way the comparatively small troubles which come to us in our daily life may loom so large, because they are *our* troubles, that they may obscure great cosmic facts which are not brought home to us.

Thus eventually this Star knowledge gives us a wider horizon, and we see that worldly success or failure is after all a small matter. It is only the temporary success or failure of one day in our real life. One would prefer, of course, that one's work every day should be equally effective, but we all know as a matter of fact that it is not so—that though for all of us there are some days when everything goes well, when our plans work out, when other people are complaisant and do exactly what we want them to do, and everything flows along smoothly, yet there are other days which for us personally do not go so well, when we find that other people have their plans which do not necessarily fit in with ours, when we put forth our best efforts and yet do not achieve our aim.

No wise man troubles about that. He recognises that, while he lays his plans with far-reaching thought and does the best he can, yet sometimes those plans will fail; and he is well satisfied with his life on the whole if it shows a preponderance of success over failure. He realises that failures must come to everyone; that seems inevitable, and there is no reason why

we should be worried by it. It all depends upon whether we are able to take the troubles philosophically. If we do that, they do not militate against our ultimate attainment. Just as we in our personality regard the single days of our life, so does the ego regard what we call a single life. Because each incarnation is an integral part of the true life, he takes great care to do the best that he can with each birth; but if in one of them he fails, he is by no means depressed, but just tries again next time, thinking always of the great plan which is being worked out through all his lives. That is what is of importance to him, and that always comes right in the end; for we have the certainty that final success lies before every one of us at the end of the whole long line of our lives. That is the will of God for him; that is the purpose for which he is sent here; therefore final failure is impossible.

It is, however, by no means impossible that we may cause ourselves a great deal of *temporary* failure, and therefore a great deal of trouble and sorrow which might easily have been avoided. We can delay our progress—many of us do; but that is our own fault and should not happen, and when we learn to estimate relative values aright it assuredly will not. We shall make our happiness and our progress for ourselves, and such slight difficulties and troubles as come often from outside we shall bear philosophically, knowing that they also are our own doing; only they are our doing in a distant past and so now we cannot alter them, but can only bear them.

If we look round the world we see a great deal of suffering and worry. No doubt we shall also see, if we look fairly and honestly, that a great deal of the pain

is (not meaning it in any way unkindly) the sufferer's own fault, that to a large extent it is not karma from some far-distant life, but the result of foolishness or lack of common sense now. These are the failings which bring upon people most of their troubles. Even of those which remain, those which are unavoidable, they usually make the worst instead of the best. Men take a thing badly when they might as well take it calmly and philosophically, and so they make it a hundred times worse for themselves than it need be. The real karma of the past is but small for most of us; by far the greater part of the trouble, difficulty, sorrow and suffering is that which we bring upon ourselves by present and not by past actions.

That being so, by care, by common sense, and by reasonable self-control, we can minimise the sorrow and suffering. Even then there comes some which is hard to bear, some which is apparently inevitable. Strength to bear that comes to us from the teaching of the Star, because we know that it is all the result of our own action in the past; because we know that soon He will come, and that His Coming will bring an outpouring of power which will help us to present a bolder and a braver front in the future. Knowing that He is coming to us, and coming so soon, we have strength to bear what comes now, because it is no longer a hopeless matter. It is simply the discharge of an old debt, and when that is paid, however unpleasant it may be, at least we are free from that incubus in the future. So much is gained; and in the knowledge of the great reinforcement which is so soon coming to us, surely we can hold out even under serious sorrow and serious difficulty until He shall come who will bind up the broken hearts and fortify the wounded souls. So

our Star knowledge gives us a wider horizon, and we begin to see that after all these are but the light afflictions which endure for a moment, and that when He shall come we shall surely have that far more exceeding weight of glory.

The teaching of the Star gives us also the strength to resist what are commonly called temptations. What are these things called temptations? They are the call of lower desires of various kinds. Some of these are actively evil, coarse passions, sensuality, envy, jealousy, irritability; all those must be sternly repressed. We must turn ourselves entirely away from them, from even the possibility of them, to the contemplation of higher and nobler things. But many of the things that are called temptations are merely foolishness, mere waste of time. It is the fashion to speak of young men as being tempted in various ways, but what do they do? Mostly they loaf about at the corners of the streets; they laugh vacuously, and probably tell one another stories that had much better not be told; and in that last there comes in, of course, some active evil. But for the most part it is simply vacuity; it is lack of development, lack of brain power. So with many of these things said to be temptations. They are temptations only because as yet the people are ignorant and undeveloped; because they are not prepared yet to understand or appreciate anything more rational, anything raising them to a higher level. People go to horse races or boxing matches, they go to music halls, and to many stupid social functions. Generally there is nothing absolutely wrong about these entertainments, but they are waste of time which might be employed in really useful work, in the helping and the strengthening of our fellow men.

All such waste should be impossible for Brothers of the Star because they have a reasonable interest. They know of something in life which is real and true, an over-mastering fact. There is something important for them to do—something for them to think about which is worth considering. They throw aside those lower things as inconsistent with it, and soon they cease altogether to care for them. There is no longer any virtue in resistance, because there is no longer any desire for those lower and more foolish things. The truth is that we have grown up. Then we were children from the point of view of evolution, and were pursuing all sorts of silly ideas. A little child will play for hours with something which does not strike any of us as in any way amusing or interesting; but at that stage it pleases him greatly. As a general rule the child does not make a sudden resolve that he will put these toys aside. He grows older, and finds that he does not care any longer for them. He plays with dolls perhaps for a while, and then presently he discovers that he does not care for dolls any more. It is now a bat and a ball in which he takes an interest; he likes to play games in which he can exercise his muscles and learn ingenuity and quickness. Later his ingenuity takes the form, perhaps, of making something, and then he may become a carpenter or an engineer. So by slow degress he grows up to definiteness of purpose and comparative wisdom.

We as souls are doing the same thing; we are growing up. Once we could afford to allow our bodies to amuse themselves with all sorts of useless activities, but as soon as we get a real soul-interest, the soul dominates the body at once, and though for a little time the astral body may hanker after the lower things

from which the ego is now withdrawing it, it soon reconciles itself to the new departure, and the interest of the soul, as it should do, entirely overshadows those temporary weaknesses of the body. So it is hardly a virtue to resist that kind of evil, because it is no longer a temptation to us; but in so far as we do need strength to resist, this Star teaching gives it to us. Remember that while we are still *resisting* temptation the battle is in progress. When it is won we cannot take other than the wiser course, and that means that the ego has dominated its vehicles.

We want also strength to act. Most men do nothing definite in life. I know that each man earns his own living, and he often finds that definite and hard to do. But that is merely the physical side of his existence. The real man, the soul, is often doing just nothing at all. He drifts through life with no useful interest, and all that he is thinking about is what he can gain for the silly personal self; nothing more than that, nothing higher than that. But so soon as a man comes to realise the Coming of the Christ, he has at once an interest which causes him to wake up spiritually, to look round and see what he can really do, not for the personal self, but for this Christ who is to come. He must begin to prepare himself, and soon he tries also to help others to prepare.

The first activity for most of us is to make ourselves fit—to make ourselves real and efficient souls. We must develop the qualities needed for work, and in order to do that we must train the character, we must get the vehicles in order. That is quite a large piece of work for the average man, but he realises in a moment that it must be done, when he knows that the Lord is coming.

Then comes his second activity. When he has made himself fit for work, when he has developed the necessary qualities, he begins to try to do it. He looks about to see what he can do to help towards the Coming of the Lord, what he can do for the Star, and he goes to work and does it. That is highly necessary, for some of us are a little apt to stop at the beautiful thought. We think how glorious it is that the Christ is coming; we send out all sorts of kindly and devotional thought—kindly thought towards our brothers, devotional thought towards the Christ Himself. And that is good. That is true and noble and real work, but surely we should not stop at that; since we have physical bodies, since it is to the physical world that the Christ is to come, we must do something more than set up activity on the mental and astral planes. We must also remember to do something definite on the physical plane. Remember, all useful activity helps to prepare the way for Him, and all useful activity may be undertaken in His name.

There are many things to do, there are plenty of lines of activity; but at least let us be sure that we are doing something. Let us be definitely on God's side. A great Teacher once said, you may remember, that in the whole world there are only two kinds of people: those who know and, because they know, are working; and the people who do not know and are therefore idle. We may classify them as those who are on God's side, who realise that there is a great struggle going on and are trying to help; and those others who have not yet realised that there is any definite object in life at all. They are the great crowd which has to be lifted, which has to helped. You must be either one of the helpers or one of the helped. You must be one

of those who lift the heavy burden of the world, or you must be part of that burden. If you know nothing, if you are still following your personal aims and objects, you are a unit in that heavy weight which those who work have to bear and to raise. Every time that one of you comes over from the ranks of the lifted to the ranks of the lifters there is a definite advance. That is what is sometimes called conversion, a grand old word which is often used wrongly. You turn round from following your own pleasure, and follow instead the line of duty, the line of evolution, and so you become a fellow-worker together with God. Your strength to do this is given to you by your knowledge of the Star and of all that it means.

Let us then, who are Brothers of the Star, never fail to be also workers for the Star, realising that our knowledge is a mighty power and at the same time a mighty responsibility. If we do not know, that is a poor excuse, but at least it is something of an excuse. It might well be said: "You ought to know; you ought to look for yourself and see"; but at least some can say: "I did not know that I was causing trouble, that I was being lifted instead of helping." That is where the majority of the people in the world stand; they are blankly ignorant; and that is why we must help them and teach them. It is not necessary that those who wish to be on the right side join the Order of the Star or the Theosophical Society; but it is clearly necessary that they should realise that there is a God in Heaven, that God's Will is evolution, and that in this world those who help Him, those who are on His side, must definitely be raising themselves as part of that evolution, and acting not for themselves but for others and for Him.

THE FREEDOM OF THE STAR

THE FREEDOM OF THE STAR

IN these days we think much of our freedom; indeed, we are sometimes apt to boast of it; yet I think that in the case of many people there is a good deal of illusion about it, and they are not by any means so free as they habitually suppose themselves to be.

We who are Brothers of the Star ought in this to be different from others. We have a knowledge and a hope which they as yet have not, and this knowledge and this hope must fundamentally alter our lives in many ways. Among other results, we have a greater measure of freedom.

Unquestionably man has a certain amount of free will; and yet it is really only quite a small amount when one comes to think of it. Theoretically we are free to act as we will; but the circumstances which surround us, the customs of the time, and our own personal limitations, all contribute to curtail our freedom, so that in practical effect we can by no means do always what we wish to do.

Many of the restrictions which trouble us are not imposed from without, but are entirely of our own making. Of course in one sense all restrictions are of our own making, because we get exactly what we deserve. If our character hinders us, if our powers are limited, it is because we have made ourselves what we are. If we find ourselves born in a country where

there are many restrictions upon freedom of various kinds—some perhaps of law, but far more made by custom—it is because we have deserved just that kind of birth. Consequently in that sense the whole thing is our own doing; and our membership of the Star, and our understanding of what the Star has to teach, will not entirely remove the limitations of our birth, though it will be distinctly serviceable in reducing them.

I do not mean that the mere membership in the Order will do so. One takes it for granted that those who are members of our Order are so because they share our hope for the Coming of the World-Teacher, and because they have something of all the additional knowledge of which that most inspiring piece of information is only a part. It is not our membership, but it is the fact that, belonging to the Order of the Star, we carry the Star in our hearts as well as on our breasts, and that we have something beyond the ordinary ignorance of the outer world—that we know something of the great truth which that Star symbolises. That knowledge does set us free from many of our troubles and our difficulties. It is true that we are limited by our capacity, but we can largely develop that capacity, and so minimise that particular limitation. The external limitations imposed upon us by the laws of our country and by the customs of the time—those too are sometimes tiresome, but on the whole quite tolerable. At any rate, we are used to them and think little of them.

But, apart from these, people bind themselves seriously in many quite unnecessary ways that not only limit their usefulness, but prevent their enjoyment of life. They limit themselves by fears, by worries and by prejudice. All those are ways in which large

numbers of people—by far the majority of mankind —are sadly chained and enslaved. In all those ways our knowledge of the Star and its teaching should make us absolutely free. The point of view which we take who belong to the Order, is one which is absolutely different from that of the ordinary man of the world. Clearly the man living the worldly life regards temporal matters as of paramount importance. He is still in the state of mind and in the condition of thought which make him a slave to the world around him. If he is to set his thought free, and be able to use it as God intended that it should be used, he must altogether change his point of view, and instead of thinking of worldly matters from the point of view of the personality down here, he must learn to try to look at spiritual matters from the point of view of the soul, because that is the permanent part of him, the part which matters.

So long as we live down here in this world and do not raise our thoughts and our aspirations above it, we are tied down to a material life which is in reality a mere prison-life. There is no freedom for a man who is bound by his passions, by his prejudices, by his fears. Such a man as that may describe himself, by a figure of speech, as living in a condition of liberty because he registers a vote occasionally, but so far as anything like actual freedom of action or freedom of thought is concerned, the man has none. He is living upon the lowest level, practically in a dungeon. He cannot rise above that, and look round and see the truth. The first step towards any real liberation is that a man should learn to see things as they are. That is precisely part of the knowledge which his study of our Star literature will bring to him.

We are expecting the Coming of the Great World-Teacher, but since we expect that, we also believe in the Great Hierarchy which sends Him, the great Divine Power behind, of which even the Great World-Teacher Himself is but one manifestation. Then again the mere fact that we think of a World-Teacher—a Teacher not for ourselves alone, not for this sect or for that, for this little congregation or parish or for that, nor even for this great religion or for that, but a Teacher for the whole World—shows that we are coming into the atmosphere of freer thought, that we are rising at least to some extent above the more petty prejudices.

Most people have little idea of the extent to which they themselves are limited by prejudices. Probably if one accused the average man of prejudice, he would say: "Oh, no, I have not any prejudices." Then if one pressed the matter, "Well, I do not like so-and-so; I do not like the Catholics, of course I do not like the heathen. I do not know anything about them, but I suppose their beliefs are all wicked and all nonsense." And so on. It needs clairvoyant sight to gauge accurately the extent and the number of the prejudices of the average man. We encounter them even in talking with them, in trying to deal with them; but until we can develop higher sight, and look at their mental bodies, and see what sort of a spectacle they present, we can hardly realise the extent to which they have voluntarily imprisoned themselves.

It is difficult to give a clear idea; but the position is this. A man's mental body surrounds and interpenetrates his physical and astral bodies, and is visible to clairvoyant sight as an ovoid built of

the matter of the mental world. That ovoid ought to be filled with light, beautiful, delicate colours and the particles which show these colours should all of them be flowing quite freely, moving about among one another much as the particles of a gas are supposed to do. They should have a considerable free path. In that mental body there will be a certain number of vortices, like whirlpools in the surface of that ovoid of exceedingly fine matter. A few of those are necessary and reasonable, and show simply the various directions in which the man's mental power has been developed; but if we look at the mental body of the ordinary man clairvoyantly we shall see that he has scores of them; and this should not be.

Two or three facts will force themselves on our attention. The body as a whole is in a quite undeveloped condition. Only part of it is in activity at all. The man does not think all round and in all directions, but only along certain limited lines and with limited powers of thought. That, after all, is not so much his fault, because that is the stage at which humanity is at the present moment. It is occupied in the evolution of that mental body. The physical body is fully developed. It is true that often our physical bodies are far from being healthy, far from being what they should be; but in most cases that is our own fault, because we do not treat them properly.

Our astral bodies are far from being properly subdued as yet. We have spasms of distinctly uncontrolled emotion—irritability, desires which would be better away, "envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness" sometimes, I am sorry to say. There is a great deal in the astral body which is by no means yet

in order, but it is perfectly developed. That is to say it is capable of all the higher and more beautiful feelings, when we use it so that such feelings can manifest through it.

But when we come to the next stage, the mental body, then we are not by any means so well developed. We are in process of unfolding the powers of that body; there are a few men among us—some of the great geniuses, great thinkers, great philosophers, whose mental bodies are far more flexible than those of ordinary men, but even they as yet are by no means as great as they will be in the future. They will be more glorious still as evolution goes on, not only by their own unfolding but by the refinement of the mental matter in which they are working.

This is apart from our present subject, but I may just explain that the matter through which we manifest on the various planes is itself in process of evolution, and so, however advanced we may be as souls, we yet have harder work to progress through the use of this as yet only partially developed matter, than our distant descendants millions of years hence will have when, the matter itself being more evolved, improvement of all sorts will be easier. There is that to be taken into account.

That is where man stands at the moment. He is developing his mental body (putting aside the few highly advanced persons who have already evolved it considerably more than the average). Therefore we cannot yet expect from him perfect mental freedom; but if we examine that part of the mental body of the ordinary man which is in activity, we shall discover that it is almost entirely covered with what look like warts. We shall find, if we look further into this

phenomenon, that each of these is represented down here by a prejudice. The man's thoughts on some particular subject or block of subjects are going round and round in a vicious little circle. Instead of spreading all through the substance of the mental body as they should, they are restricted to that tiny little circle. That vibrates more and more rapidly until it becomes relatively hard, and indurated. No impression with regard to that subject can get into the man's mental body from outside without being much distorted and discoloured; and on the other hand no thought of his own about that matter can possibly be clear or unbiased, because it has to work through this accumulation which he has allowed to form.

That man may suppose himself free to think with regard to that subject; but in reality he is quite incapable of any real thought about it. He cannot know how biased he is, because if he knew it, the chain would cease to bind him. It is precisely because of his ignorance that he is so unable to free himself. Vast numbers, even among ourselves, who really ought to know better, are still bound and limited by prepossessions of various sorts. We have achieved a great victory when we have really, thoroughly cleared away even one of these warped ideas, these false and cruel judgments. It may be a religious prejudice, for those are among the commonest; we know that there are thousands, even millions of our fellow-creatures who are the veriest slaves in the bonds of religious prejudice. These poor victims can see only through the particular faith that has been taught to them. They have no conception that outside of that there can be anything that is true on religious matters, and often, so illogical are they in their partiality, they actually cannot

believe that there can be good people who hold beliefs different from their own.

That may sound ridiculous, but I can bear witness myself to the fact that such unfairness does really exist. I have met again and again people who had so bitter a bias against Roman Catholics, that they suspected every Roman Catholic of being a villain at heart. I know it sounds ludicrous; but it is unfortunately a fact. They say: "Who said that? Oh, but she is a Roman Catholic, you cannot depend on her word"; or: "I do not send my child to a Catholic school; they will undermine all her morals." It is a disgrace to humanity that there should be people capable of such remarks; but they exist.

It is not only in one direction. I have also heard the same thing from the opposite side. The Roman Catholics will say sometimes of the Protestant: "I would not have anything to do with those people; they have no basis at all for morality. You do not know what they may do or say." Those, you will say, are extreme cases. They are, yet they are sadly common; but short of that extreme, a good many of us have little pet prejudices of our own about other religions and other races, and many people also feel, in a minor degree, in the same way about foreigners; we say: "They are different from us."

It is not a new idea. That phrase reminds me of a passage in the Vedas, which are amongst the oldest known books, in which the Aryans, coming down over the Himalayan mountains into India, are advised to exterminate the civilised people—much more civilised than the Aryans were—root and branch. They must destroy them; there is no truce to be held with those terrible people under any circumstances, and why?

The reason given is: "Because their rites are different." Their religious rites were different, and so they were utter villains, and there could be no good thing among them. Ten thousand years have passed since then—perhaps more. We ought to have improved in ten thousand years, but there is something of the same feeling even now.

We who know something of the Star ought to be able to eradicate all such thoughts from ourselves absolutely. We ought to be able to take things as they are, and not allow our intellect to be clouded and our minds to be deceived by preconceptions. Let us see for ourselves what kind of people these are whom we meet, and take them as we find them. Even then let us beware lest from one or two specimens we should judge a whole race or a whole religion.

That is another thing that people constantly do. It may be a trifle less unreasonable than the prejudice which is a mere matter of hearsay, but it also must be avoided. They meet with one Frenchman who does not please them, and then they say: "I do not like the French." To judge a nation by your knowledge of one person is not only to act unjustly, but to bind your thought down. You must learn to have your thought free and to be able to think for yourself, and to use your own reason and your own common sense.

Religious dogma binds some people's intellects very terribly indeed, but many and many a time they bind themselves far more securely by their own prejudice than any faith imposed from without could do. We must realise that there is good in all beliefs, and that the differing temperaments of mankind require varied presentations of the one eternal Truth. Our particular form may be the best for us, but there are many

others to whom it would be entirely unsuitable, whereas the form which exactly meets their requirements would be ill-adapted to ours. Some men find that all that is highest and best within them is evoked by stately ritual and gorgeous ceremonies; other men are so constituted that for them ceremonial seems to be an obstacle rather than an aid. Some men prostrate themselves in uttermost devotion before the Blessed Virgin Mary; others are horrified at the mere idea of paying reverence to a woman, and regard it as idolatrous! *Tot homines quot sententiæ.* But He who made man knows all that far better than we. Remember how He spoke through one of the oldest of the Scriptures: "However men approach Me, even so do I welcome them; for the path which men take on every side is Mine."

See how people are bound and imprisoned by their fears. The religious element is, I am sorry to say, the worst in that respect. People are brought up to fear God. You are told that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"; but that belongs to the Old Testament; that is the Jewish idea. No wonder those early Jews feared the terrible and bloodthirsty tribal deity in whom they believed; but why should Christians follow so bad an example—Christians, to whom Christ has preached the doctrine of the loving Father? If you propound to me that *reverence* for God is the beginning of wisdom, I am with you entirely; but to translate "reverence" by "fear" seems to me a horrible and wicked falsification, because it misrepresents God, and there is no worse thing that you can do to any man than to give him a false idea of God. That is the terrible mistake which lies at the root of all the harm done by the various religions. Most religions

have done a vast amount of good in the world, and so far they are fine and beautiful and necessary; but because of their distortions they have bound men in chains stronger than steel. They have misled men where they ought to have taught them, and there is no misleading more serious, no deception more cruel and more wicked, than to teach men and women and little children that they should be afraid of the Loving Father of all.

When people fear, at once they are in bondage to that fear; and the worst of all fears is the fear of God. Love God—yes, for God is love; but to fear God—no, there is something radically wrong if a man feels fear towards the Great Father of us all.

A great many people spend their lives in fear of something or other. They are afraid that they may lose their money, or afraid they will not be able to make any more; afraid that they will be discharged from their positions; afraid of what others may say about them; afraid of death for themselves, or afraid their relations may die; afraid that they will be estranged; that this or that piece of business will not turn out as it ought to do; but always they are afraid of something or other. They actually *invent* reasons for fear. "So-and-so passed me in the street without looking at me; I wonder what has happened, or what he has heard about me?" Out of this they construct a story, and really believe it, while the whole edifice is nothing but the baseless fabric of a dream. They are like children who tell each other ghost stories until they get into such an excited state that they are afraid to be alone or to be left in the dark. There is nothing really to frighten them, but they make a bogy for themselves.

Adults seem often no wiser. For more than a thousand years men have been erecting the bogy of a personal devil, and have wasted a vast amount of fear upon him. He does not exist, and he never did exist. They invented him, and then frightened themselves (and, far worse still, frightened their children) with this impossible entity in semi-human shape. We can see how ridiculous the idea is, the moment we think; yet millions have believed it, and it has been a curse to their lives.

No man who is in a condition of fear of anything whatever can be a free or a happy man. God means us to be free, and God means us to be happy, and we who love the Star should realise that its teachings liberate us entirely from all these futile and foolish fears. It is to us a Star of Freedom.

When people fear, they worry. Worry has brought thousands of men to a premature grave, and never yet did the least good to anyone. We must somehow bring home to ourselves the conception that it does not matter what *happens* to us from outside; whatever it be, it is the result of the past, and cannot now be modified; the only thing we can do is to bear it philosophically, and make the best we can of it. What *is* of importance is *how we take it*—the attitude which we adopt, because that will affect our future. Let us learn to be calm through sorrow and through joy, through evil report and good report; let us "do our best and leave the rest," with an utter certainty that we leave it in good Hands.

For the love of God is greater
Than the measures of man's mind,
And the Heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.

So do your work quietly, and try to help your fellows also to attain the Freedom of the Star.

What is the fundamental cause of worry? Always ignorance. It comes because people cannot grasp the essential truth that we are living in an evolving world, and that all this mighty current of evolution is tending towards ever better and better conditions. "That which was good doth pass to better, best," as Sir Edwin Arnold puts it. There is an unwavering stream of development from lower to higher, from bad to good, from good to better, from better to best.

There is no vagueness or uncertainty about this; we are sure beyond peradventure that all is well. However dark it looks, evil must be temporary, because it is opposed to that steady stream, and contrary to the Will of the Supreme Power; good must be permanent, because it is a move in the right direction. And clairvoyant investigation shows conclusively that these inferences are correct, because the facts in Nature support them.

You fear death? It is no more than sleep; it is only a stage in an endless life, and the next birth will in any case be one step nearer to the goal, and must therefore be in some ways more advanced than this. There is no such thing as annihilation; nothing but constant progress. Remember what was written by the Muhammadan sage: "I died from the mineral, and I became a plant; I died from the plant, and I reappeared in an animal; I died from the animal, and I became a man; wherefore then should I fear? When have I grown less by dying? I shall die from the man, that I may grow the wings of an angel." There is the advantage of knowledge. That man knew something of the line of evolution, and therefore

he said: "Why should I fear? I *know*." That is precisely what you in the Order of the Star ought to be able to say: "I know these things, why therefore should I fear? I will not allow myself to be entangled by this fear, by this worry, by these prejudices; I will maintain my freedom."

God has given us a certain amount of free will. He gives us more and more as we learn to use it more wisely. The restrictions that we find around our free will have been placed upon it in our interest.

Among the many weird errors with regard to God and the nature of things has been the idea that God enjoys torturing man, limiting and cramping him; that He lays down all kinds of ordinances: "You must do this or that"—apparently for His own pleasure. It is an utterly ridiculous theory. It is true that the laws of nature are laid down, but they are laid down for the benefit of evolution. The whole scheme is built in order that this gradual unfolding may take place, and laws are imposed in order that it may proceed more readily and more safely. We had but little free will at first, because it was obviously so likely that we should misuse it, and if we misused it we might do great harm to ourselves. So soon as man developed a little more intellect and began to understand a little better, promptly more free will was given to him.

So it goes all the way through. We are far freer than was the savage, for example. In time to come man will certainly be freer far than we are now, but that will be only because he will be less likely then to blunder through ignorance. The higher we climb the further we can fall. So long as we are likely to fall we must not be led to any great height, and yet we

must study to rise higher and higher. Unless we do, our progress will be inconceivably slow.

We must gain perfect freedom; but we can approach it only gradually. We must learn how to use the powers which are given to us before we can safely be trusted with more.

Watch a mother teaching her child to walk. She knows that the child will fall in the process, yet she must let him try to walk, otherwise he will never learn. She is not worried about the fact that he will tumble, but she takes care that it shall not happen where it will hurt him. She teaches him to walk on a lawn or some place of that kind—not at the top of a flight of stone steps. She does not take the child up to such a height that the fall will be dangerous, because she knows it is sure to come.

God treats us much in the same way. We have to learn to use our powers. It is quite certain that at first we shall use them stupidly, but we must not have the opportunity to ruin ourselves; we must be free, but not too free in the beginning. So we learn by degrees, as we live our successive lives, that to use our freedom according to His laws and in His service is the only safe way; and the man who acts thus all the time will find not only that he is perfectly safe, but also that his freedom grows rapidly, because he can be trusted with it.

It is a difficult lesson to learn that freedom does not mean licence, but if you will fall back on the grand old teaching of the Church, you will remember how it is said in one of the Collects of the Church of England: "In whose service is perfect freedom." That is the *only* perfect freedom—not freedom to do all kinds of foolish things, but freedom to act joyously in God's service and as He wills.

Freedom such as that should be ours in the Order of the Star. What we learn makes it clearer to us that along certain lines our freedom may be exercised not only with safety, but with the most useful results. Along those lines then must we work, submitting ourselves to the Divine Law, because we know that it is a beneficent law, because we know that any restriction which God Himself places on our action is placed for our good and for our ultimate progress and advantage. But while readily and joyously obeying that Law we must determinedly shake off such man-made fetters as fear, worry and prejudice, because only then shall we know for certain what is God's will for us, and along what line He intends us to move.

That is the perfect freedom; that should for all of us be the freedom which the Star brings us.

THE PEACE OF THE STAR

THE PEACE OF THE STAR

I WANT to speak to you to-day of the peace of the Star—the calm which the Star and all that it means ought to bring to you who are trying to follow it. For the moment I do not mean that peace which is near to the minds of us all—the cessation of the horrors of war; I am thinking rather of the personal peace, in the heart, in the soul, in the spirit, which the knowledge of the truth should bring to those who are so fortunate as to have it.

The lack of that inward repose is one of the most trying of all the characteristics of our age. There is great unrest everywhere, mental and emotional unrest of all kinds. People are disturbed and uncertain because they are ignorant; and strangely—most strangely, if one thinks of it—the terrible war, which seems the very opposite of any idea of peace, has yet had this as one of its results even already, that it has brought tranquillity of mind to many who before were strangers to it, because it has put before them certain great fundamental conceptions, it has brought them face to face with the facts of life. Thus confronting those facts, many have found that what before troubled them is after all of no real importance; that the points about which they were so worrying themselves, matter little when one has to consider the first principles of life.

We have come a little nearer, perhaps, to the realisation of what *does* matter, and in that realisation calm has taken the place of sorrow and trouble for many minds, because they have come to see that "underneath are the everlasting arms," and that there is a mighty Power behind it all upon whom they can really depend. That is precisely the certainty that the Star ought to bring to you who are preparing yourselves, and so far as may be, trying to prepare the world as well, for the Coming of the Great World-Teacher, thereby showing that you accept the idea of a Messenger who is sent out by the mighty Hierarchy. The fact that you accept Him shows that you believe in the guidance from behind, that you know that in truth all must be and will be well, even though at the time clouds may seem dark, even though for the present it may be difficult for many of us to see how the final peace shall come.

If each man has in himself this inward repose, the conditions of the world around him will trouble him but little. Whether in the outer world there be peace or war, the man who understands will be following out the line of his own duty, undeterred by external disturbances, and so for him inside there will be peace, even while he fights for his country, as all true men must do in an emergency like this. Even in the midst of the fighting there will yet be the interior quiet, the certainty that all is well. If one loses a physical life, after all what is that? If it be lost in the cause of duty, it is a piece of work well and nobly done; and since the life which we now live is only one day in the real and greater life, to put aside the physical body is something which we have all of us done many times before, which in all probability we shall do many times in the

future. It is nothing more than casting aside an outworn cloak and putting on another:

Nay, but as when one layeth
His worn-out robes away,
And, taking new ones, sayeth:
"These will I wear to-day!"
So putteth by the Spirit
Lightly its garb of flesh,
And passeth to inherit
A residence afresh.

That certainty is invaluable in the teaching of the Star. We could not know so surely that a World-Teacher is coming, unless His Coming were part of the ordered, recognised mechanism, the plan of human evolution. If there be Those who are guiding the destinies of the world, guiding it slowly but surely towards a goal far greater than any we can yet imagine, then all the stages on the way to that marvellous consummation must also be well. Therefore there is no need for worry; there is no need to allow within ourselves any kind of disturbance, even though there be much of such disturbance in the outer world. We find it in every way—even physically, in the way people have of rushing about from place to place.

If we think of it—we rarely *do* think of it, I take it, for we have been born into the conditions which surround us—our grandfathers, or even our fathers, knew nothing of the manner in which we career about the world from one side to the other, from the Equator to the Poles, from Australia to England, to India, or to America. None of our ancestors moved about as we do; they mostly stayed quietly at home, and when they did travel, it was in a leisurely way, by coach. This rapid circulation has its good side and its bad side. People get into this habit of restless disturbance to such an extent that they constantly expect to be

moving about, and can never be happy in one place. But on the other hand, they come to know one another better, and to understand the people of other nations through visiting their countries and seeing their customs; and so their minds are widened.

Unfortunately the restlessness does not stop at the physical plane. There is also a mass of unreasonable emotion in the astral world. People are perpetually having their feelings stirred up, and they get into a condition where they need that, or think they need it, and are not satisfied without it. Constantly they must be going to theatres and cinematographs, they must always be reading novels; all sorts of new emotional sensations must perpetually be titillating the surface of their astral bodies. I do not say that the emotions are necessarily bad; on the contrary, they may often do good. I am not objecting to the custom; I am simply noting its existence, and remarking that it may be carried to an unreasonable excess.

If you could look back to the lives of your grandparents, you would find that they were without all these excitements. They read an occasional story; but you would consider most of those stories a little slow in the present day. If you read the novels of that time, those written by Bulwer Lytton or Fenimore Cooper, you will find pages of description and argument and psychological analysis before you come to a single action or event of any kind. Now people want their sensations served hot—plenty of action and movement, a murder about every ten pages, and excitement of some sort all the way through; often, I am afraid, the excitement of impropriety. That is the popular attitude and the popular feeling. We can see it if we examine the books which are most in evidence.

and begin to evoke something of the Eternal Joy. The joy of love is an emotion, truly, yet it may produce and does produce vibration in the buddhic vehicle of the man, and so it passes that which is merely temporal, and in that higher extension it enters the realm of the changeless.

We have many other emotional joys which are by no means so high as that, and yet are real joys in their way. A man reads, perhaps, some story which excites the emotions—not by any means necessarily evil emotions—often feelings of sympathy, of beauty; all that is emotional joy. He goes to a theatre, or to see the cinematograph, which is taking so large a part in modern life. Why does he go? Because there is a certain emotional excitement to be derived from what is put before him; and it would be a mistake to suppose that that is necessarily an evil thing. It is true that both the theatre and the cinematograph have prostituted themselves sometimes to the stirring up of undesirable passions, but nevertheless the fact remains that there is a high possibility there. Sometimes we have put before us in that way, in picture instead of in print, instances of noble self-sacrificing life and of high courage; and that cannot but be good for us. So in many cases the emotions may be turned to good use instead of evil; and there is a real joy in that.

Then there is mental joy. I suppose most of us know something of that; of the pleasure of success in mental work, in the solving, perhaps, of some difficulty that has caused us much trouble and much thought; or in discovering the way to do something, which is a part, in a smaller way, of the joy of the inventor. The man who finds out the way to do something that has not been done in that way before has a deep and real

joy. Even in Occultism we may have something of the mental joy—the joy of progress made or of truth learnt.

Yet none of these of which I have been speaking are exactly what I mean by the joy of the Star, for that is the joy of the soul, of the ego who stands behind and tries to control this personality. Our belief in the near Coming of the World Teacher brings us into touch with so much other knowledge as well. It shows us so clearly that there is a great scheme of which we are all part, that this world is not just drifting helplessly, hopelessly on its way, but is being definitely guided and directed. Sometimes it is impossible for us to see how the guidance is working, to distinguish what is the intention of this particular event or that; but the more we study the inner and the deeper side of things, the more overwhelming is the certainty that the world *is* being managed and steered on its course, and if it *is* so governed by an Almighty Power, clearly all that happens can be used in some way for this wonderful scheme.

There are many occurrences that seem to us terrible, but we know that sometimes strong measures are necessary; sometimes the quickest and the best way to attain a result is by a movement which, to one who does not understand its purpose, might well seem to need much explanation.

Man himself has free will within certain limits, and his use of that free will is a factor in what is being done. The scheme has to be carried out, and occasionally the free will of some men comes into conflict with it and must be swept aside, and so arises much which has the appearance of evil; and yet if from behind we could see the whole thing, if we could look down from above upon the pattern that is being woven, we

should see that, however terrible may be the process of cleansing, it is yet better for all that that cleansing should take place, because it is necessary for the arrival at the grand and glorious result which lies before us.

So the knowledge, the certainty which, through the study of the Star and of the Coming, is brought to us, gives us a deep, inner joy which nothing can take away; but it is in no sense a condition of selfish isolation. Think of all those joys which I mentioned earlier, and you will see that every one of them is really a temporary joy for the personality—not at all necessarily ignoble, but still a joy for the personality, for the man himself.

There is a joy in unity, a joy which we share with every other human creature who has evolved himself sufficiently to be able to grasp it—the joy of the whole, no longer personal, but universal. I do not mean mere contentment. We have spoken of that—of the peace which the teaching of the Star brings to us all. It is not merely the satisfaction which comes from knowing that all is well and that everything will in the end work itself out, but it is the active joy of taking part in that great work. Towards that the teaching of the Star may lead us, and as the old parable put it, we shall "enter into the joy of the Lord".

Did you ever think, I wonder, exactly what that means? You remember the parable: how a small amount was given to each of those servants to use or invest, and those who did well with it were commended by their lord when he returned, and the words which he used were: "Thou hast been faithful in a few things, therefore I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy lord." I suppose

that most people who hear that read in church simply think that the employer is going to give some great festival or something of that kind (if they think of it at all, which few do); but if you try to understand, you will see that the expression means much more than that. The thought conveyed is this: "You have been faithful over a few things which I trusted to you. As a reward for that I am not giving you a vast amount of money; I am not giving you any great pleasures of the ordinary kind; I am not sending you to rest in indolent ease; far from it. But I am going to make you ruler over many things" (evidently of the same sort); "you have done well in the small thing in which I tried you; now I am going to try you in something greater and better; and it is precisely that which makes the entry into the joy of the lord."

All that is a symbol of the work of the True Lord, the Logos. What is the joy of the Logos? Remember how the old Greek philosophers spoke of the making of the universe as "the play of Bacchus," which was one of their names for the Logos; and they enumerated the "playthings of Bacchus"; and when one who has no knowledge of the inner meaning reads the list, he does not understand it at all; but one who comprehends will see that He plays with the atom, with the worlds, and with those mighty forces whereby solar systems are brought into existence. That is His joy; that is His play; thus He sacrifices Himself and descends into matter, and limits Himself; He is the Christ crucified upon the cross of matter in order that we may come into existence, in order that we may rise and evolve and at last be even as He is.

The joy of the Lord, then, is not idleness and ease, but work. It is the keen joy of calling out all this

universe—not truly from nothing, but yet from what appears to be nothing when looked at from the lower standpoint. It is the calling out of chaos of a whole solar system, and by His own sacrifice ensouling that and working through it, and carrying its glory to its consummate end.

That is the joy of the Lord, and we have to enter into that sort of joy with Him. It is to that joy that the Star and its study, and the practice of what is taught in it, will bring us. The joy of the Lord is the joy of active service. He calls us to understand His work and, understanding it, to take part in it; and I tell you (and every seer and every mystic who has ever lived will tell you the same) that if you can once see what that work is, if you can once comprehend the marvellous beauty of that plan of His there will be nothing else possible for you than to throw yourself into that work, to try to your uttermost to realise it in its fulness and to co-operate in it. You will feel that, however small may be the part which as yet you can bear, yet to bear even that small part is a greater thing than the most glorious of earth's victories. You will see that there is in that realisation far more life and joy than in anything at a lower level; and there is the utter certainty of it all.

We have the joy in His near Coming; but we have also utter joy in the knowledge of His mighty plan, trusting all to Him who knows, and realising that He calls us to work with Him and for Him. And so our great Protector has said:

In treading this Path it grows brighter as ignorance lessens, it grows more peaceful as weakness vanishes, it grows serener as the vibrations of earth have less power to jar and to disturb. What it is in its ending, Those only can tell who have ended: what it is at its

goal, Those only may know who stand there. But even those who are treading its earlier stages know that its sorrow is joy as compared with the joy of earth, and the very smallest of its flowers is worth every jewel that earth could give. One gleam of the Light which shines always upon it and that grows ever brighter as the disciple treads onwards, one gleam of that makes all earth's sunshine but as darkness; they who tread it know the peace that passeth understanding, the joy that earthly sorrow can never take away, the rest that is on the rock that no earthquake may shiver, the place within the Temple where for ever there is bliss.[1]

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[1] Annie Besant, *In the Outer Court.*

THE LOVINGKINDNESS OF THE STAR

THE LOVINGKINDNESS OF THE STAR

I HAVE spoken to you at our recent meetings of various qualities which the membership in the Order of the Star ought to evoke in us. I have spoken to you of the Freedom which it should bring, of the Wisdom and the Strength which it gives us, of the Peace and the Joy which should be such prominent characteristics in those of us who have the very great privilege of belonging to this Order.

I want to speak to you to-day of another quality which that membership should bring forward. Perhaps it is a quality which includes them all. It is the most important of all, at least, if we are to follow and to believe the old teaching; for long ago St. Paul spoke of this Lovingkindness, and told men that of all things this was the greatest—that they might give all their goods to feed the poor, that they might know all mysteries and have all knowledge, and even give their bodies to be burnt as martyrs, yet if they had not this Lovingkindness it all counted for nothing.

I am choosing this old-fashioned word "lovingkindness" intentionally. Our custom generally is to speak of this quality as "love," and I think that that inevitably imports a certain amount of unreality into our thought on the subject, because it is a word which we also use for the very closest and highest feeling.

that we can have. We think with reverence of the love of a mother for her child, of the close tie between brother and sister, husband and wife; all these affections have that name of love, and quite rightly. Most reverently of all we think of love to God; but when, after that, we speak of feeling love for humanity, I am afraid that often there is just a touch of unreality about it, because we cannot and do not (speaking quite frankly) feel towards humanity as we do towards husband and child.

We do not and we cannot; and furthermore, it is not expected that we should, and that is a thing we ought to have quite clearly in our minds. When you are called upon to love humanity as you love your brother, you feel: "I do not know humanity in the same way; how can I have the same feeling?" It is true that you cannot have it in the same degree; but you can have a feeling of quite the same nature, though less strong, and that is precisely what you ought to have and what is wanted; but I think that if we can use some other word for it, we shall remove a little the sense of unreality. There will come a time in the future when our love for all men will be quite as strong as our affection for our nearest and dearest is *now*; but by that time our whole nature will be so raised and purified that our power of affection will be immensely greater than it is at present, and the love which we shall then pour out upon those closest to our hearts will be a force compared to which the highest emotion that we can reach now is but "as moonlight unto sunlight, or as water unto wine".

I feel that unreality is a grave danger in the path of the student. It is a thing against which I have always myself tried to fight in whatever I have said

or written for my fellow members, because it seems to me a very serious matter that in all affairs connected with the inner world and with religion we do not take anything to mean quite what it says. It is perhaps not entirely our fault, because of the unfortunate fact that there is a certain atmosphere of unreality in connection with a great deal which is said in religion.

It is not my business here, or in any way my desire, to draw invidious distinctions of any sort; but if we have ever thought at all about religion as we see it round us, we cannot but have noticed that it does not follow exactly the original teachings given by the Founder of Christianity. Mind, I do not know whether it could have done so; that is quite another matter; but the fact remains that it does not. We all know the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount—that we should take no thought for the morrow, as the morrow will take thought for the things of itself; that if a man strikes us, we should turn the other cheek; if he takes our coat we should give him our cloak also. That is a definite line of teaching—the line of non-resistance. Whether it is best for the ordinary man of the world now—whether it was ever intended for him at all—is not the point. I am not criticising the theory; I wish only to point out that it is read and preached Sunday after Sunday, and it is not lived. Nor is it only that point. There is a vast amount of teaching which practically everybody ignores, which nobody makes any attempt to put into practice. I cannot but think that that is unfortunate. It is not a question whether it would be possible or desirable to follow out that scheme now; but to have a definite teaching, and continue to proclaim it, and yet not make any attempt to obey it, does give a certain

feeling of unreality. It gives the idea to many people that religion is a fine theory, but by no means a practical matter—that when it comes to daily life, people do not try to live according to it, but are satisfied with aiming more or less in that direction.

Now when you are taking up this occult study of the inner side of things, you must somehow or other get yourself to understand that Occultism means exactly what it says, and that it does not tolerate any lip-service, or any pretence to do that which you are not doing. We announce to you, for example, the great law of cause and effect—of karma. We say: "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," and there is no question about it. If you sow an evil thing the result of that evil thing will come to you, and you cannot avoid it in any sort of way; but again and again people think of evasion; they say: "But surely there is some way in which we can escape the consequence." No, nature does not work that way. Put your hand into the fire, and you will be burned; your intentions may have been good, but that is not the question. We are dealing with natural laws, and we must learn to face the inexorability of their action in a manly and dignified manner.

That is why I have not called this address "The Love of the Star," because, though truly it is the feeling of love which we mean in this case, I do not want to introduce a touch of unreality with regard to it. I want you to see exactly what is meant.

I conceive that what is meant by "lovingkindness," that attitude in which we who are members ought to be, is much what is described by the distinguished Secretary of our Order of the Star in the East in the beautiful poem *Christmas Eve*, which he recently wrote

while recovering from the wound which he received when fighting for his country, as all true men who can must do. He writes:

> And lo! I noted a strange kindliness
> Softening each eye that rested on another;
> So warm, it seemed the stranger claimed no less
> Of welcome and of love than friend or brother;
> Till hardly might I guess
> Which several link, 'mid all that I could see,
> Bound each to each in that large amity.

In that poem he portrays a condition which he hopes may come to exist after the war is over, and as the result of the Coming of the Great World-Teacher, and what he depicts is simply a state of affairs when people are reasonably kindly to one another. That does not seem much to ask. It does not seem much that people should be honest and true, kindly and friendly; but the world at large is by no means always that yet on the surface. Mind you, it is there. The Divinity is in every man, and even this form of the Divinity—the Lovingkindness which is so true and so great an expression of God—can be called out. But it is not always there in daily life. Constantly people speak ill of one another and think badly of one another, and do things which assuredly they would not do if they were full of this Lovingkindness. They undermine one another's characters, they circulate scandals; but with all that, the very people who are full of gossip and uncharitableness in daily life will forget all about their uncharitableness and want to help if there is an accident of some sort in the street. The Lovingkindness is there, but it is glossed over, crusted over with all these horrible, selfish habits that we have. That is what is the matter. The true love which manifests itself in the wish to help and in

benevolence is there practically in everybody, even in those who are coarse and in many ways undesirable.

That which our Secretary voiced in his poem is the hope of many, that this War will have, among other effects, the result of bringing folks nearer to their true selves by tearing away a great many of the conventions, so that they may let the true spirit within them well out; and that true spirit, be sure, is a good spirit, if you will give it a chance. Men are painfully selfish, yet these very men, common and uneducated, will rise to heights of heroism now and then, when a chance is offered. They will rush into terrible danger to save another man, or to rescue a child from a burning house. They deliberately put the child or the woman on board a boat in a shipwreck, when only a few lives can be saved, and stay behind themselves to face death. The love shews through when a great emergency calls.

What we want in our Order of the Star, is that our members should not wait to be stirred out of their lethargy by some great emergency, but should be ready to shew that Lovingkindness all the while in daily life. What a difference that would make in the world! We can hardly imagine it. It is a great deal to expect that men should live up to their highest always. Yet that is certainly in the future before us. We shall all be that some day, for we aim to evolve to the measure of the stature of the fulness of the Christ, and that is unquestionably part of it. It may be that we cannot yet do it all the time, but we can try; and the more we try the nearer we shall come to success, while if we do not try, it will certainly be a long time before we attain that perfection, or we shall have to wait for the slow course of evolution to push us.

Let us get to work, here and now, at the effort to make ourselves what we ought to be. If we cannot succeed all at once—well there is a reason for that; from one point of view we are not altogether to blame, except for the fact that we are so hopelessly behind the times. If there is a great deal of self-love in us yet, it all comes from the fact which I mentioned previously—that man was individualised out of the animal kingdom long ago, and that for and in that individualisation there was the need for egotism; but now we have reached a stage in which any remains of that are fatal to progress, so all men should be earnestly endeavouring to weed out the last traces of it. Those who are not doing so are the younger souls, altogether behindhand in the march of evolution. It is useless to be angry with them for their youth—these undeveloped people who are still so terribly selfish; but they ought to try to grow, so as not to be so hopelessly out of fashion. They are behind the times, they are not yet old souls; but if we are older souls we must behave as such, and shew that we have outgrown that egotism which belonged to the childhood of the human race.

How should we manifest our Lovingkindness? I think, first of all, in readiness to help. Readiness to help does not mean eagerness to interfere; that is a point we have to bear carefully in mind. We must always be ready give any help we can, but we must not force it on folk when they do not want it. An excess of zeal is as bad as an utter lack of it. Not to offer help, when we can give it, would be callous, careless, selfish; but to be always pressing our views upon people, always pushing in when no help is needed, is officiousness and interference. That is in bad

taste; and bad taste is criminal. So we need wisdom; we need to steer our course carefully. Be very sure that you are fully ready to offer help when opportunity comes, but do not thrust your ideas down the throats of your neighbours, for that is neither politic nor kindly.

On the one side I am afraid we often have a far too weighty sense of personal trouble; we feel that it is too much exertion to get up and do an act of kindness. On the other hand, it is possible for us to try to do too much. A person whose life is already full, may well and rightly hesitate before taking upon himself some additional duty, even though it be obviously a fine and beautiful thing. He may say: "Other work will suffer if I offer myself for that." But for most people that is not true, and if they do not set themselves definitely to work, it is not so much because their lives are already overcrowded, as because they have that weighty sense of personal inconvenience, and do not want to undertake hard work which is not absolutely forced upon them. Each man must judge for himself what he can do; and we have to try to be ready to meet all sympathetically. That is clearly part of our work, and the power to do it is a necessary qualification for one who wants to be a good and true Brother of the Star. To sum up, we must always be ready to help, and furthermore we must always be watching for opportunities to help; but we must be most careful not to interfere, not to thrust ourselves in where we are not wanted.

Another way in which our Lovingkindness should shew itself is in always believing the best that we can of everybody and everything. I am sorry to say that that is a rare qualification. As one travels about

the world, more and more one sees that most men and women are always ready to attribute evil motives, that they are always trying to find out something to say against others. I do not deny that people occasionally act from bad motives, though the man who does so does not usually know or think that his motives are bad; he is for the moment clouded by passion, or does not stop to consider the consequences of his act. He sees only one side, he is thinking only along one line, probably selfishly. Few men intentionally do a wrong thing; therefore those who go through life attributing evil motives to everything which others do are three-fourths of the time deliberately telling untruths. (It is practically deliberate; for the untruth is usually patent, and it would take them so little thought to satisfy themselves that their statement is untrue that to go and tell it does amount practically to deliberation.) They assign all sorts of evil motives to others, generally because they have begun with a wrong idea. The proverb says that if you give a dog a bad name you may as well hang him at once. It is true about human beings also. If you start with a bad opinion about a person you will distort every action and work of his to fit in with that preconception, and you will go on believing a mass of evil about him, all of which is simply "the baseless fabric of a dream". You will twist the simplest things that he says, and suppose that some deep and dark treachery is involved in them. I have seen that over and over again.

I have sometimes tried to bring together people who were at variance (for that is often part of the work which we have to do) and again and again I have found that each person has been going

on for weeks and months, and sometimes years, storing up remembrances of what the other person has said and done, and all the time distorting and misunderstanding it. The most innocent, everyday actions and remarks are wrested to mean something hostile, something underhanded, something mean. It is a great pity that any man should go through life like that. For one thing (let us be selfish for a moment, if you like) just think what he is doing to himself. He is surrounding himself and filling his mind with thoughts about mean, underhanded, treacherous action, instead of with thoughts of good and beautiful action. Why should he? Why should he brood over all the bad things? It is to his own Master that each man stands or falls—not to us; it is not our duty to keep count of his sins. Let us have the decency to put it all aside and think of the good which the man does. Let us always try to take the best view; we can generally find excuses, and we should find them fast enough if we did the same thing ourselves, or if a brother or a son whom we love did it. Suppose you should hear some dreadful story about your brother or your son; you would meet it with indignation; you would say: "It is nonsense, there is something wrong in the story, it has been exaggerated, it is all untrue." If unfortunately you happened to know that it was true, and you could not deny it, you would at least make all possible excuses, and in the last resort you would observe silence; you would say nothing. Why not do as much as that for your brother in the outer world? You might refuse to believe the bad stories against *him* until you are compelled to do so, and even then you can always fall back on that great virtue—silence. It is what you would do for one you loved.

Do it with regard to other people, whom you ought to love.

If you have this love, this Lovingkindness for the world, let the gossip end when it reaches you. When possible say: "It probably is not so"; when the story is obviously true, see what excuses are to be found for the action of which you disapprove. If there is nothing to be said, you can at least keep quiet, and not add to the evil.

So it emerges that we can always be cheerful, optimistic, longsuffering; and if we firmly expect good we shall generally get it. Not only is it generally quite wrong and false to think evil of the other man, but by thinking that evil about him your thought acts upon him and you actually do the man harm, not to mention the people to whom you tell the story. If you shew him that you expect evil from him, he will suspect you, and will very likely live down to your suspicion. Expect the best and you will get the best.

It does seem as though many people were actually eager to think of something evil to say about others. What I should like to see is that they should be just as eager to say *good* about others; and then, when the evil does come—silence.

In order to do all these things one has to forget oneself. That is a hard thing to do, but the best way to do it is to try to help others. You have not time to think about yourself if all your life is filled with the idea of helping others. You could not be full of pride or envy, you could not feel hurt or take offence at what other people said or did, you could not be pushing forward and asserting yourself, if you were thinking all the time about helping other people. All such

feelings lead to strife, not to lovingkindness. The selfish assertion, the feeling—"I am as good as you and a great deal better"—never helped any man yet, and certainly has been responsible for a vast amount of harm. If you are so sure of your superiority, you need not think about it. You do not need to be always asserting it; it will shew itself. That feature is prominent among the really great people of the world, the representatives of grand old families. You do not find people of that sort always asserting themselves and claiming honour; they take it all for granted. But when you find a parvenu who is trying to push into that sort of society, you see some one who is always feeling insulted and not properly honoured. The really great people know quite well that they do not need to assert themselves, and they never do it.

We too can surely afford not to be proud and self-assertive. It does not matter in the least what anybody else thinks of our action, but it does matter a great deal to us what we think, what we feel, and what we do, because that is what makes our future. That is what makes us what we are. We have no need to pretend to be anything else than what we are; for in occult progress all pretence is absolutely useless. We are dealing with facts, and facts are the only things which we can take into account; and the great laws of Nature, which are the Divine Laws, work also by fact, and decline to be persuaded by pretences of any sort whatever. It therefore becomes necessary for us to put aside all that assertion of self which is involved in pride, in envy, in jealousy, or in readiness to take offence.

Our business is to radiate peace and love upon all. That is the best way in which we can prepare ourselves

for the Coming of the Lord, and assuredly that is also the best way in which we can try to prepare others. Remember what Saint Paul said two thousand years ago:

Now abideth Faith, Hope and Love, these three: but the greatest of these is Love.

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE STAR

THE SYMBOLISM OF THE STAR

A FEW days ago a public official, who knew nothing about our Order of the Star, asked from a group of our very young members:

"Why do you wear those silver stars?"

Fortunately one of them had the courage to speak up, and he said:

"It shows that we expect the Coming of a World-Teacher; it is the symbol of the Order of the Star in the East."

The official was mystified and turned away, without asking any further questions. Again, a little while ago, another who does not belong to us, seeing the reverent care which we take of our stars, said:

"Why do you think so much of the star? It is only a symbol."

That is true, but you know the cross of Christ is only a symbol, and yet thousands of martyrs have died for it, and it has been an inspiration and a help to millions who understand its meaning. The British Flag is only a symbol, yet men are dying by thousands for its honour now. The star may be only a symbol, but it means a great deal to us who are Brothers of the Star. I trust it may mean a great deal to the world in a few years' time, when our Organisation has

spread further and when we have done more of the work to which we have pledged ourselves.

What then does the Star mean? Our Order is the Order of the Star in the East, and to hear that mentioned at once suggests to us the Gospel story of the Three Wise Men (the Three Kings as tradition says) who came and said: "We have seen His Star in the East and are come to worship Him." And when they saw the star again, it is written that "they rejoiced with exceeding great joy". Most people go no further than that story to find why we wear the star, but there is more than that in it. The five-pointed Star has a symbolism which goes far beyond that; for when a candidate reaches the portals of Initiation the Star flashes forth above his head. Why? It flashes forth to indicate the approval of the One Initiator, the Great Ruler of this world under the Solar Deity, the Great One who is put in charge of evolution down here. The Star is His symbol: the five-pointed silver Star. When that Star so flashes out, we must not think of it as sent there by an effort of His will, because it was there already, long before it was visible. His mighty aura, the influence of His Power, surrounds the whole globe on which we live, but when for purposes of His own He chooses to make that tremendous power manifest at a certain spot, that portion of that mighty aura flashes out for a moment (or longer, as may be wished) in the likeness of the Star. Therefore the silver Star is the symbol of the Immanence of God. It is the sign that He is everywhere; that at any moment He can show Himself, can manifest His power at any point in this great world.

Our silver Star, therefore, means much more than merely the Star in the East; it signifies something

which will certainly be a prominent part of the teaching of the Great Lord when He shall come—the knowledge that God is everywhere, that we are all alike Gods in the making, and sons of God; and that therefore Brotherhood is a reality which cannot be disputed, which cannot be doubted, because God is in us all, because the Divine Star may flash forth at any moment in any human heart. That is the real meaning of your symbol of the Star. It means that God is within us and without us, and that because we recognise the divine in every man, therefore we have a perfect brotherhood of man; not a brotherhood only of those who know that fact, or believe it, but a brotherhood of every human creature, and going beyond that, a brotherhood which includes all that lives, animal, vegetable, or mineral, for all those live in their respective degrees, all are permeated by the same Divine Life; and so very truly is the Star the symbol of Brotherhood.

In our Theosophical seal we show forth another star—that which has six points. The two triangles of which it is made are interlaced: the upward-pointing triangle signifies Spirit, and the other Matter; and they are interlaced to show that we know nothing of Spirit unless it be manifest in some sort of Matter, and nothing of Matter unless it be ensouled by Spirit. There we have another star, another suggestion.

From yet another point of view this five-pointed Star signifies God in man. If you will look at some of the Theosophical diagrams you will see how that fivefold man is represented there; Spirit, Intuition and Intelligence—the three qualities which in man represent the three aspects of the Godhead—are manifesting now through two vehicles, the mental and

the astral bodies. You will notice that that is the level which humanity has at present reached. The physical body is not counted in that enumeration at all, because that was fully developed long ago. The development of the astral body is being perfected; the development of the mental body is progressing. That is the stage at which humanity now stands, and therefore the man is counted as five-fold in that theory of occult development. There will come a time, perhaps, on some other planet than this, when the astral body will be neglected as already done with, when the mental body will be the only vehicle; and then the Star will have only four points. Then the symbols of the star and the cross and the rose will all blend together, as they are meant to do, but that is in the future.

For the moment the five-pointed Star represents the fivefold man, and therefore emphatically the God in the man, so to us it is a great and a glorious symbol because of its signification, because we have learnt through much study to understand a little more of what it means than would be apparent at the first glance. So our Star to us is an embodiment of our deepest and holiest beliefs. Therefore we reverence it; therefore we wear it; we delight to explain all about it to those who do not yet know. When He, the Lord, shall come to teach us, no doubt He will carry our thought on much further, but even already this symbol is one which brings us hope and love, and our faith in it and in all that it means carries us through our worldly life and makes us far happier, far more useful than if we had not known it.

Such thoughts will widen out your perceptions very much if only you will study them, if only you will

understand. There is so much that is beautiful, so much that is well worthy of your understanding, of which the ordinary man knows nothing whatever. We say in these modern days that we have transcended many of the beliefs of the Middle Ages: so we have. We have learnt that many of the things which men then believed are superstitions, but we shall be seriously wrong if we decide that all ancient beliefs were superstitions.

If we reject them all indiscriminately we shall lose a great deal that is of the deepest importance; and there is no doubt that our modern incredulity—perhaps it is only semi-modern now, because it was at its acme about the middle of last century—the scepticism which culminated about the middle of the last century or perhaps a little earlier, had distinctly cast away much of the truth along with many things that no doubt were unworthy to be kept. Now people are beginning to feel a kind of reaction from that scepticism, they are beginning to see that though our ancestors believed a great many things which we now know to be untrue, along with those very things they had glimpses of many truths which we have thrown aside because we did not understand.

Remember how they believed in the fairies and in the angels. The scepticism of fifty or sixty years ago cast all that aside as nonsense, but people now are beginning to understand that there is a truth behind it. We find a book like that of Professor Wentz, *The Fairy Faith in Celtic Countries*, in which a man of science, a man with degrees from several Universities, takes the trouble to go forth and collect evidence from different countries and put it into a book, and after much careful examination of it comes to the conclusion that the

evidence is irrefutable—that fairies do exist. Then he proceeds to classify and talk about them. He discusses the whole thing on the basis of their actuality. He is quite right; such things *do* exist. The great angels also exist, though men have denied them.

It is well that we should use discrimination because, although eager, blind credulity is certainly a bad thing, equally ignorant incredulity is perhaps, on the whole, rather worse. It leads men far from the truth; it cuts out of their lives all that is beautiful and poetical, and absolutely without giving them any compensation. It is for us, then, to use our intellect, to decide for ourselves that this belief has in its favour a vast amount of evidence, and therefore we accept it. There are other beliefs for which as yet we can see no evidence, and so we lay them aside, not, if we are wise men, denying them, but saying simply: "I will put that aside until I know more about it."

I have studied these things now for nearly fifty years, for I went into such matters long before I joined the Theosophical Society; and the end of all that study for myself is assuredly that I have evidence of the reality of a great many of these things—also that I have learnt never to deny, never to say this or that is absolutely impossible, because there are so many things in earth and in heaven which are not included in our philosophy up to the present, that it is not safe ever to deny blankly. All that one can ever wisely say is: "I have no evidence of such things, therefore for the present I hold my mind suspended on the point; I put the thing aside." To deny, therefore, is often a more foolish thing than to believe credulously, and I hold that it shuts a man out more effectually from the higher.

Let us therefore be eclectic in our belief, but wisely so. Let us beware of accepting without evidence, but equally let us beware of rejecting without evidence, of casting aside new thoughts or new facts because we have not seen anything like them before, because they do not seem to us congruous with other things that we know. Remember that the most studious of us knows but very little as yet: remember how Sir Isaac Newton spoke of the scientific man as only "picking up pebbles on the shore of a mighty ocean." It is not for us to deny: it is wiser to be cautious both in accepting and in rejecting.

All that is included in this higher symbolism is something for us to study carefully and intelligently, in the hope that such study may lead us to a truer understanding of nature, a truer understanding of this wonderful and beautiful old world in which we live, and so to a closer touch with Him who made that world, with Him who informs it, who is in it everywhere, in it and through it and beyond it—Him whose symbol is the silver Star.

But there is another side of its symbolism. We have considered the external, the cosmic side; now let us turn to the human and practical side. He who wears the Star should himself be a Star; the qualities and the powers of the Star should show themselves in him in daily life. Every one of us has a special duty to perform because of his membership. We undertake to think of and to try to promote the knowledge of the Coming of the World-Teacher. We undertake to prepare ourselves, and also, as far as may be, to try to help in the preparation of others, for His Coming. We undertake to develop certain virtues—devotion, steadfastness, gentleness; and if all those undertakings,

with all that they imply, were fully carried out, we should indeed be an organisation of wondrous power for the benefit of humanity. But our members sometimes forget that the duty of the member of the Star is not merely to attend Star Meetings, to read and perhaps to distribute Star literature, but also and quite definitely to lead a certain life because of the Star and all that it means.

The first thing that we know of a star is that it shines forth for all to see. It is the duty of each member of the Star so to live that *his* light may shine forth for all to see. That idea is put before you in the Christian scriptures too. You will remember the expression: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

I have always felt myself that the wording of that text in our English version needs a slight revision or qualification, because it is so written that it might bear the implication that you ought to let your light shine *in order that* it might be seen of men. There are plenty of other texts showing that the man who does his good works to be seen of men is in reality doing little good. There is the story of the Pharisees who for a pretence made long prayers in public places and at the corners of the streets, in order that they might gain the praise of men; and you will remember how the Christ said of them: "Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward." They sought the praise of men and they got it, but that is *all* they got. They did not seek an answer from on high, they did not seek an outpouring of the Divine Spirit, and they did not get it; but what they sought, that they did get.

We would then warn our members most earnestly that this does not involve any idea of posing or of setting themselves upon a pedestal for others to see; but nevertheless we have to remember that we do stand as representatives of our Order to those around us who know that we belong to it; and although it would indeed be evil for us if our good works were done only for the good report that we should have among men, yet we must not forget the cardinal fact that, as we are taken to represent our Order, in a very real sense the honour of the Order is in the hands of each of its members. He can cause it to be lightly spoken of, he can—I will not say disgrace it, because none of us would do that—but he can diminish its power for good by not acting as a member of the Star should, and by forgetting sometimes the great object that lies before him and the brotherhood to which he belongs. Therefore it is the duty of the brother of the Star that he should shine forth before men: that he should never bring any thought of discredit upon the Order of which he is a part, but should always ray forth help and love upon all.

The Star shines; it steadily goes on shining; the light flows forth from it in all directions and all the time; just so should love towards all flow out continuously from every brother of the Star. As I remarked in a previous address, I am afraid that people often to some extent misunderstand such a remark as that—that it seems unreal to them. We are constantly told in Theosophical teaching that since all men are brothers we must pour out brotherly love upon all, but it is not reasonable to suppose, and it has never been expected that you should feel alike towards all.

What is expected is that you should be in a brotherly attitude towards all, that your feeling towards them should be one of kindness and of readiness to help. You love them all because they are men, and men are our brothers, but that you will love better those you know better is an absolute certainty, and I think that from a misunderstanding of that really obvious fact has risen an unfortunate attitude in which the love for all has been regarded as merely a sort of sentimental idea, and not a real thing. People have felt the impossibility of feeling towards all as they feel towards a few, and therefore they have thought: "This is a counsel of perfection; it cannot be done now; it is one of the things one reads in the scriptures, but one never hopes to realise."

There is nothing written in any scripture which you may not hope to realise, for God is within you, and the Divine Power can bring you at one or another stage of your evolution to the level where all that is written can be done. This at least you may do immediately: you may adopt the attitude of general friendliness instead of general suspicion, and in that sense the kindly feeling (which after all is love, though not the intensity of love that is poured upon those we know best) shall be radiating out from you in all directions all the time.

The attitude of the average man is to radiate suspicion. When he comes into contact with people whom he does not know, he is at first reserved and irresponsive; he has a certain amount of suspicion; he thinks: "What are these people going to get out of me? How are they going to use me?" I do not deny that, as the world stands at present, the man has a certain amount of justification for adopting such a

position, because there are many people whose chief idea is to exploit everything for their own advantage; but I do say, also, that there are many who are not in that attitude, who are ready to welcome a friendly advance without calculating as to what will follow it. Therefore the man who stands in a suspicious attitude provokes from others the very thing of which he is afraid. He verily by his own suspicious thought puts into the other man's mind the idea that he may make something out of him; whereas if he approached him with the feeling of potential love, of kindliness and readiness to help, he would evoke that thought and call forth that part of the man's nature, and assuredly would find himself far better treated than he is at present.

The world is to you, to a great extent, what you are to it. It is a mirror, it is a reflection: as you present yourself to it, so in many ways will it take you, and in turn present itself to you. If you go about full of suspicion you will find plenty of reason for suspicion, and you will suspect in a thousand cases where it is not justified, because of, perhaps, one or two where it would be justified; and that is an evil thing to do. If, on the contrary, you go about full of the loving and the confident feeling, you will sometimes be deceived, no doubt; but it is a thousand times better that you should sometimes make a mistake on that side, even though you may suffer somewhat from it, than that you should once make a mistake in the other direction of suspecting the man who did not deserve suspicion.

Therefore shine forth as those who love, as those who are kindly, as those who expect the best from every man, for if you radiate forth that feeling it is wonderful and beautiful to see how many people will

respond to it—in how many cases where you expect the best confidently and show that you expect it, people will rise to it. You will find it over and over again. But your shining forth must be irrespective of their response; you must pour out your good feeling equally, without thinking what their reply will be, and without minding what it is. You are always giving; do not think about receiving, do not pour in order to evoke from them some return. Pour out your kindness and your affection because it is your nature—because that is *you*.

Some people may say: "I am afraid it is *not* my nature." If it is not your nature then make it so, and make it so at once; for you are God, and it is the very characteristic of God that He pours Himself forth into all His creation, and that His stream of Love is never failing, that it rains alike upon the just and upon the unjust. The sun shines upon all, and the Divine Love pours upon all. There are those who shut themselves away from the sun in caverns and in vaults. There are men who shut themselves away from the Divine Love in the shell of their own sin or sorrow or distrust, but the Love is there for all who will take advantage of it. So in your smaller way should your outpouring of love and good feeling be always there quite irrespective of the reply; but it must have that great characteristic that it does not expect return. If once you sully it with selfishness, with thought of what you may get, then it becomes no longer Divine, for that is not the thought in the Divine Mind.

We have not the right to live carelessly when once we are brothers of the Star, for the Star itself and all which it means may be blamed for our carelessness, and that should not be. There is far more harm done

in this world by want of thought than by want of heart, as a poet has said. There are perhaps people—very few—who definitely do evil, knowing it to be evil, for some object that they wish to get. None of you would do that; but many a time through want of thought we produce the same evil result that we might have produced intentionally if we were wicked. We are not wicked, but yet through carelessness we produce that result; it is a pity.

The first thing to remember, if our lives are to be like the Star, is that those lives must constantly shine. The second is that they must shine with a pure white light. Now what is the white light? The white light contains within itself all other lights. The colour of white is the combination of all colours. The pure white light can respond to everything, because it contains within itself that which can so respond. Whatever colour you may wear, whatever colour you may paint in your picture, the white sunlight will show you that colour, because it is contained in that white light. If you use a light of only one colour—a perfect red or blue or yellow light—and throw that upon your picture or your clothing, you will see at once that you do not get the proper hues, because that is only one part of light and not the whole. It cannot respond to the other colours, it cannot give them their true value, because it does not contain them.

That also is an allegory. Your light of love and sympathy must be the white light, because that alone comprehends all. You may have a light that may be ever so powerful and beautiful, but if it is a light of one colour it can respond only to that colour. If you have within yourself the white light, the pure light of tolerance and of comprehension of all, from that white

light each can take what is necessary for him, and so you are able to respond to all; you can provide for all, you can sympathise with all, you can meet all, because your love contains all. You comprehend, you keep the true proportions; you do not let one colour become so emphasised that you cannot respond to any other.

A man of one religion follows that as his colour of the light of truth, but he must be prepared to understand and to respond to the different colours of other men's religions. It is not only in regard to religions; it is true also of types of disposition. One man is an emotional man; another is an intellectual man; one is always pessimistic and critical in his attitude, the other is optimistic, on the whole confiding, and willing to make the best of everything. These men distrust one another and misconceive one another's actions to the very point of hatred, all because they do not understand one another. No one asks you to give up your own point of view; it is probably just as good as any other man's, or at least it has *some* truth behind it; but you must be prepared to make allowances for the other man's point of view also, because if you do not you cannot help that man; you have not the pure light of truth, and therefore you cannot respond equally to all. That is another important characteristic of the star.

Again, the star guides men; the mariner steers his course across the trackless deep by reference to the stars. The compass guides him, but constantly he checks his position by reference to the stars, so truly the stars are the guides of men. In the same way you who are brothers of the Star should naturally be guides to others, because you know more. It is sometimes true that it is only a little more, that it is only more in one direction, and perhaps less in others; but still that

which you know more than others is the very part of the great encyclopædia of life which is most important to know, especially just now. You know of the Coming of the World-Teacher. You know of the way in which men must live to prepare themselves for Him, and just at the moment that is of the greatest importance; for a little child who knows the way can guide better than the wisest philosopher who does not know it. So the fact that you know that one thing makes you to some extent able to take the position of a guide in life to those who do not know it.

But see to it, that you *do* know more; see to it that you *do* understand why you belong to the Order of the Star, and all that it means. Knowing that, having that knowledge to give, always be ready to give it, always be ready to give any help that you can in any way and on all planes, night and day. For many of you, whether you know it or not, work much away from the physical world at night, and do good, earnest and valuable work. Night and day, on this plane or on the other planes, always be in the attitude of being ready to help. If anyone wants a friendly hand or a word of advice, there you are ready to give it; but be careful how you offer it. The word of advice may be of the greatest value if it is given tactfully—if it is put in the right way with no thought of yourself, but with only the desire to help. On the other hand if it is thrust forward officiously it may be resented as an intrusion, an impertinence, instead of a friendly offer to help where help is needed.

Therefore you must have wisdom besides your enthusiasm; otherwise you may often do much harm, and fail in doing good where you might have succeeded.

Then another quality of the Star which you must have strongly is its steadfastness. That is one of the qualifications which we undertake to develop within ourselves. The star is *always* shining. Sometimes clouds arise and get in the way, but that is not the doing of the star. The star is there, is always dependable; so surely, if we wish to imitate the star, and to show forth the virtues of the star in our daily life, we must see to it that *we* are always dependable, that we are not swayed by the storms of the personality, that we are not people of moods. Many a person spoils his usefulness by not being always the same, by not being available or dependable when wanted. Remember (for that may help you in this matter) that those moods and their changes do not belong to you at all.

You are an ego—more truly, you are a Monad, a spark of God's own fire—but the manifestation of that down here is the ego which is dominating (or should be dominating) your personality. That is the nearest representative of You, the Monad, which you can touch or at present realise. Therefore you must be that—that Inner Soul. That is as steadfast as the needle to the pole; the real man, the Soul within, has no object but development, unfoldment. It is for that he is here; for that the glorious Spirit, the Monad, has put himself down into the ego, for that in turn the ego has also put himself down into this personality—for that one object and no other, for the realising of the power, for the becoming one with God, for the unfolding of the God within him. It is only for that he has come, and therefore he has no other object.

Down here you seem to find yourself pursuing all kinds of other objects; but that which is pursuing is *not*

you, and you should realise it. When you find sweeping over you at times moods of irritability, of blackness and spiritual dryness, remember that it is not you, but an elemental—that it is the living matter of your astral body, and the living matter of your mental body. These things which you have created for yourself and for your service, should be acting merely as vehicles; but, like a horse which runs away, they have a will of their own, and are taking you in the wrong direction. It is only that, and you should not be a slave to them. You are to assert yourself, and be the true You.

So you must have the steadfastness of the Star. All these things are merely the earthly clouds that rise and dim your light. You are the Star, and you must shine steadfastly through it all; you must triumph over it, and like the Sun, which for us is the greatest Star of all, you must disperse the clouds by that steadfast shining. The personality must be the mere expression of the individual, because in that way only are you reflecting the great Light. For remember: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, in whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning." And so there must be no variableness or shadow of turning in *you*—the Star down here.

Yet one more quality you must have in your Star. You must be steadily increasing in the light that you pour out. You are an evolving entity; remember what evolution means. "*Volvo*" means "I turn," and "*e*" means "out". You are constantly turning out, developing, unfolding the latent Divinity within you, and that evolution cannot stand still. It may drop back, sometimes, unfortunately; it may be decreasing or it may be growing, one or the other. See to it that your light

is growing all the time. You must never allow it to wane, but always see that it steadily increases, that you must grow ceaselessly, because in that very growth you are drawing in power from the Father of Lights. The growth that we see around us day by day in nature comes always from drawing in and from giving out again. So if you draw in the Power and the Strength and the Glory of God into you, pour it out again, for in that way a constant flow of the Divine Strength will pass through you, and you will truly grow. You must continue to draw this power from the Father of Lights until you reflect Him perfectly, until you shine even as He shines forth.

Yet another text from your Christian scriptures: "The path of the just is as a shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day." Remember that when you see the Star; so shall it be to you a blessing and a help; so shall you also bear aloft the Star, and do such justice as you ought to do to the splendid opportunity, the glorious karma, that has made you a Brother of the Star.

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